

Administering “Option” Plays – Update

January 30, 2012

After many inquiries and an oversight to a rule application, the SUP has amended the “Protocol for Administering Option Plays”. In this document, you will find the Protocol to follow and an extensive set of scenarios. Our goal is to clear up any misunderstandings and give all umpires the information needed for game day. All scenario results have been confirmed by Dee Abrahamson – Secretary Rules Editor.

The Protocol

At the conclusion of the play where an OPTION must be given, follow the steps below.

- The calling umpire(s) will call “time” at the conclusion of the play and meet with the crew in a neutral position on the field away from players and coaches.
- The calling umpire(s) will state the violation(s) that was committed.
- The plate umpire will process the information to determine the result of the play and the penalty for the violation(s). At this point, any umpire(s) will alert the rest of the crew of any possible appeal(s).
- All umpires must agree to the options – if not, go to the Rules Book and get the rule(s) right.
- The plate umpire will call both head coaches together and present the options to one or both (dependent upon the play). It is acceptable for a head coach to delegate the decision to an assistant coach. He/she may briefly confer with his/her coaching staff before rendering a decision. If the head coach does not have a decision to make, he/she is not required to meet with the plate umpire. If one of the head coaches does not have a decision to make, he/she is there to listen and should not interject. (**Exception:** An appeal can be made at this time. If upheld, the appeal will change the result of the play).
- The base umpires shall be close enough to listen to the presentation and be ready to rule on any appeal when requested. They must remain attentive to the field and all participants.
- Once the final option is selected, the plate umpire should reiterate the decision back to the coach for confirmation.
- Once confirmed, the selection may not be changed.
- The plate umpire will then apply the option that was selected.
- From this point, the plate umpire will accept any appeal made before the next pitch however, the outcome of the appeal will not impact the selected option.
- Both meetings between crew and head coaches should be done in a very professional and expedient manner.

Following is a sampling of scenarios that have been sent to us over the past few weeks. The first, third and 12c scenarios contain a full dialogue. All other scenarios contain the play and options. If there are any other scenarios that you have questions about, please submit the “Ask DEE” form located on the Central Hub – Home Plate.

#1 – Illegal Pitch (Full Dialogue)

Scenario: No outs, runner on 1B, 1-1 count on the batter. F1 is called for a leap by U1. Batter hits into a double play.

Action: U1 will call “time” at the conclusion of the play and meet with the crew in a neutral position on the field away from players and coaches. U1 will state that F1 committed an illegal pitch. The plate umpire will process the information to determine the options.

The plate umpire will state to the crew in this order:

Result of the play – The batter-runner and R1 are out on the double play.

Or

Penalty – A ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count and R1 is placed on 2B.

All umpires agree to the options. The plate umpire will call both coaches together. Both base umpires shall be close enough to listen to the presentation and be ready to rule on any appeal when requested. They must remain attentive to the field and all participants.

The plate umpire will present the options to the offensive head coach in the following manner:

“Coach – on the previous play the pitcher committed an illegal pitch.

You have the option of taking the result of the play . . .

The batter-runner and the runner who started on first base are out on the double play.

OR

The penalty for the illegal pitch – a ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count and the runner who started on first base will be placed on second base.

Which option do you select?”

In this scenario, the offensive head coach selects “the penalty for the illegal pitch”.

The plate umpire reiterates the selection -

“Coach – you have selected the penalty for the illegal pitch, correct?”

The coach states “YES”.

The plate umpire will place R1 on second base, return to the plate area, confirm the same batter is back at bat and present the count – 2 Balls, 1 Strike, “Play Ball”.

#2 – Runner Leaves Early

Scenario: No outs, runner on 1B, 1-1 count on the batter. R1 leaves early stealing 2B. Batter hits into a double play.

Options: Present to the defensive head coach.

Result of the play – The batter-runner and R1 are out on the double play.

Or

Penalty – R1 is called “out” for leaving early. “No pitch” on the batter and the count remains 1-1.

#3 – Runner Leaves Early and Illegal Pitch (Full Dialogue)

Scenario: No outs, runner on 1B, 1-1 count on the batter. R1 leaves early stealing 2B. F1 is called for a leap. Both infractions are called and signaled by U1. The pitch to the batter is a called strike. R1 is called out on the play at 2B by U3.

Action: U1 will call “time” at the conclusion of the play and meet with the crew in a neutral position on the field away from players and coaches. U1 will state that R1 left early and F1 committed an illegal pitch. The plate umpire will process the information to determine the options.

The plate umpire will state to the crew in this order:

OPTION 1 – Present to offensive head coach.

Result of the play - R1 is “out” and a strike on the batter for a 1-2 count.

Or

Penalty – A ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count and R1 is placed on 2B.

OPTION 2 – Present to defensive head coach.

Result of the play – The “option” selected and confirmed by offensive head coach.

Or

Penalty – R1 is called “out” for leaving early. “No pitch” on the batter and the count remains 1-1.

All umpires agree to the options. The plate umpire will call both coaches together. Both base umpires shall be close enough to listen to the presentation and be ready to rule on any appeal when requested. They must remain attentive to the field and all participants.

The plate umpire will present the first options to the offensive head coach in the following manner:

“Coach – on the previous play the pitcher committed an illegal pitch.

You have the option of taking the result of the play . . .

The runner who started on first base is “out” and a strike on the batter for a 1-2 count.

OR

The penalty for the illegal pitch – a ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count and the runner who started on first base will be placed on second base.

Which option do you select?”

In the scenario, the offensive head coach selects “the penalty for the illegal pitch”.

The plate umpire reiterates the selection –

“Coach – you have selected the penalty for the illegal pitch, correct?”

The coach states “YES”.

The plate umpire will now present the second options to the defensive head coach in the following manner:

“Coach – on the previous play, the runner on first base left too soon.

You have the option of taking “the result of the play”, which is the option selected by the offensive head coach . . .

The penalty for the illegal pitch – a ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count and the runner who started on first base will be placed on second base.

OR

The penalty for the runner leaving early – the runner who started on first base is called “OUT”, “No pitch” on the batter and the count remains 1-1.

Which option do you select?”

In this scenario, the defensive head coach selects “the penalty for leaving early”.

The plate umpire reiterates the selection –

“Coach – you have selected the penalty for the runner leaving early, correct?”

The coach states “YES”.

The plate umpire will then call the runner who started on first base “OUT”, return to the plate area and present the count – 1 Ball, 1 Strike, “Play Ball”.

#4 – Runner Leaves Early, Illegal Pitch, Batter Interference

Scenario: No outs, runner on 1B, 1-1 count on the batter. R1 leaves early stealing 2B. F1 is called for an illegal pitch. The pitch to the batter is a called strike. The catcher attempts to throw to 2B but the batter commits interference. The plate umpire calls “Dead Ball”. At the time of interference R1 had not reached 2B.

OPTION 1 – Present to offensive head coach.

Result of the play – The batter is called “out” for interference and R1 is returned to 1B.

Or

Penalty – A ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count and R1 is placed on 2B.

OPTION 2 – Present to defensive head coach

Result of the play – The “option” selected and confirmed by offensive head coach.

Or

Penalty – R1 is called “out” for leaving early. “No pitch” on the batter and the count remains 1-1.

#5 – Runner Leaves Early

Scenario: No outs, runners on 1B and 3B, 1-1 count on the batter. R1 leaves early stealing 2B. Pitch to the batter is a called strike. Catcher throws to 3B and R3 is tagged “out”.

Options: Present to the defensive head coach.

Result of the play – R3 is out, R1 remains on 2B and the count on the batter is 1-2.

Or

Penalty – R1 is called “out” for leaving early. “No pitch” on the batter and the count remains 1-1. R3 is placed on 3B.

#6 – Runner Leaves Early with Two Outs

Scenario: Two outs, runner on 1B, 1-2 count on the batter. R1 leaves early stealing 2B. Batter swings and misses for strike 3.

Options: Present to the defensive head coach.

Result of the play – The batter is out for the third out of the inning.

Or

Penalty – R1 is called “out” for leaving early for the third out of the inning. “No pitch” on the batter. This batter will return to bat next inning.

#7 – Runner Leaves Early, Obstruction

Scenario: No outs, runner on 1B, 1-1 count on the batter. R1 leaves early stealing 2B. The batter hits the ball in the left centerfield gap. The R1 is obstructed by the shortstop on her way to 3B and is thrown out at the plate. The batter-runner reaches 3B safely. At the conclusion of the play, U3 awards R1 the plate as result from the obstruction by the shortstop.

Options: Present to the defensive head coach.

Result of the play – R1 is awarded home (judgment from the obstruction) and the batter-runner remains on 3B.

Or

Penalty – R1 is called “out” for leaving early. “No pitch” on the batter and the count remains 1-1.

#8 – Runner Leaves Early, Double Play, Obstruction

Scenario: One out, runner on 1B, 2-2 count on the batter. R1 leaves early stealing 2B. The batter is obstructed by the catcher as she hits a line drive which is caught by F3, who steps on first base to complete the double play.

OPTION 1 - Present to the offensive head coach.

Result of the play – The batter-runner and R1 are out on the double play. There are now 3 outs.

Or

Penalty - R1 is placed on 2B and the batter is awarded 1B for the obstruction.

OPTION 2 – Present to the defensive head coach.

Result of the play – The “option” selected and confirmed by the offensive head coach.

Or

Penalty – R1 is called “out” for leaving early. “No pitch” on the batter and the count remains 2-2.

#9 – Runner Leaves Early, Extra Base Hit, Obstruction

Scenario: No outs, runner on 1B, 1-0 count on the batter. R1 leaves early stealing 2B. Batter hits a double to the outfield and is obstructed by the F3 as she rounds first and is thrown out at 2B. R1 scores on the play before the batter-runner is called out at 2B. At the conclusion of the play, U1 awards R1 second base as result from the obstruction.

Options: Present to the defensive head coach.

Result of the play - R1 scores, the batter-runner is awarded 2B (judgment from the obstruction) and a rounding/returning warning is issued on F3 for the first offense.

Or

Penalty – R1 is called “out” for leaving early. “No Pitch” on the batter and the count remains 1-0.

#10 –Runner Leaves Early, Illegal Pitch, Interference

Scenario: Two outs, runner on 1B, 2-1 count on the batter. R1 leaves early stealing 2B. F1 commits an illegal pitch. The batter hits a pop up near the first base line and interferes with F3 trying to catch the ball.

OPTION 1 - Present to the offensive head coach.

Result of the play – The batter-runner is ruled out for interference for the third out of the inning.

Or

Penalty – A ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-2 count and R1 is placed on 2B.

OPTION 2 – Present to the defensive head coach.

Result of the play – The “option” selected and confirmed by the offensive head coach.

Or

Penalty – R1 is called “out” for leaving early. “No pitch” on the batter. This batter will return to bat next inning.

“TIMING IS OF THE ESSENCE” . . .

Here are some scenarios involving an appeal. Notice how the “timing” of the appeal affects the outcome.

#11a –Illegal Pitch, R2 Misses 3rd base – Live ball appeal

Scenario: One out, runner on 2B, 1-1 count on the batter. F1 commits an illegal pitch. The batter hits the ball to right field and is thrown out at 1B. R2 scores but misses 3B. F3 immediately throws the ball to F5 who touches 3B and indicates to U3 what is being appealed. U3 rules R2 out.

OPTION – Present to offensive head coach.

Result of the play – The batter-runner is called “out” on the force at 1B and R2 is ruled “out” on the appeal. There are now 3 outs.

Or

Penalty – A ball awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count and R2 is placed on 3B.

#11b –Illegal Pitch, R2 Misses 3rd base – Dead ball appeal “before” option selected by offensive head coach

Scenario: One out, runner on 2B, 1-1 count on the batter. F1 commits an illegal pitch. The batter hits the ball to right field and is thrown out at 1B. R2 scores but misses 3B.

OPTION – Present to offensive head coach.

Result of the play – The batter-runner is called “out” on the force at 1B and R2 scores.

Or

Penalty – A ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count and R2 is placed on 3B.

Before the offensive team makes a selection, the defensive head coach appeals that R2 missed 3B. U3 rules R2 out. This changes “the result of the play”.

New OPTION – Presented to offensive head coach.

Result of the play – The batter-runner is called “out” on the force at 1B and R2 is ruled “out” on the appeal. There are now 3 outs.

Or

Penalty – A ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count and R2 is placed on 3B.

#11c –Illegal Pitch, R2 Misses 3rd base – Dead ball appeal “after” option selected by offensive head coach

Scenario: One out, runner on 2B, 1-1 count on the batter. F1 commits an illegal pitch. The batter hits the ball to right field and is thrown out at 1B. R2 scores but misses 3B.

OPTION – Present to offensive head coach.

Result of the play – The batter-runner is called “out” on the force at 1B and R2 scores. There are now 2 outs.

Or

Penalty – A ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count and R2 is placed on 3B.

In this scenario, the offensive head coach selects and confirms “the result of the play” which scores R2 and the batter-runner is out for 2 outs.

The defensive head coach appeals that R2 missed 3B. U3 rules R2 out. There are now 3 outs to end the inning.

#12a –Runner Leaves Early, Illegal Pitch, R2 Misses 3rd base – Live ball appeal

Scenario: One out, runners on 1B and 2B, 1-1 count on the batter. R1 leaves early on a hit and run. F1 commits an illegal pitch. The batter hits the ball to right field and is thrown out at 1B. R2 scores but misses 3B. F3 immediately throws the ball to F5 who touches 3B and indicates to U3 what is being appealed. R1 holds up at 2B. U3 rules R2 out for the third out of the inning.

OPTION 1 – Present to offensive head coach.

Result of the play – The batter-runner is called “out” on the force at 1B, R1 remains on 2B and R2 is ruled “out” on the appeal. There are now 3 outs.

Or

Penalty – A ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count. R2 is placed on 3B and R1 is placed on 2B.

OPTION 2 – Present to defensive head coach.

Result of the play – The “option” selected and confirmed by the offensive head coach.

Or

Penalty – R1 called “out” for leaving early. “No pitch” on the batter and the count remains 1-1. R2 is placed on 2B.

#12b –Runner Leaves Early, Illegal Pitch, R2 Misses 3rd base – Dead ball appeal “before” option selected by offensive head coach

Scenario: One out, runners on 1B and 2B, 1-1 count on the batter. R1 leaves early on a hit and run. F1 commits an illegal pitch. The batter hits the ball to right field and is thrown out at 1B. R2 scores but misses 3B. R1 holds up at 2B.

OPTION – Present to offensive head coach.

Result of the play – The batter-runner is called “out” on the force at 1B and R2 scores. R1 remains on 2B.

Or

Penalty – A ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count, R2 is placed on 3B and R1 is placed on 2B.

Before the offensive team makes a selection, the defensive head coach appeals that R2 missed 3B. U3 rules R2 out. This changes “the result of the play”.

New OPTION – Presented to offensive head coach.

Result of the play – The batter-runner is called “out” on the force at 1B and R2 is ruled “out” on appeal. Now there are 3 outs.

Or

Penalty – A ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count, R2 is placed on 3B and R1 is placed on 2B.

The offensive head coach selects and confirms “the penalty for the illegal pitch”.

OPTION 2 – Present to defensive head coach.

Result of the play – The “option” selected and confirmed by the offensive head coach.

Or

Penalty – R1 is called “out” for leaving early. “No pitch” on the batter and the count remains 1-1. R2 is placed on 2B.

#12c –Runner Leaves Early, Illegal Pitch, R2 Misses 3rd base – Dead ball appeal “after” option selected by offensive head coach (Full Dialogue)

Scenario: One out, runners on 1B and 2B, 1-1 count on the batter. R1 leaves early on a hit and run. F1 commits an illegal pitch. The batter hits the ball to right field and is thrown out at 1B. R2 scores but misses 3B. R1 holds up at 2B.

Action: Both U1 and U3 will call “time” at the conclusion of the play and meet with the plate umpire in a neutral position on the field away from players and coaches. U1 will state that F1 committed an illegal pitch and U3 will state the R1 left early. The plate umpire will process the information to determine the options.

The plate umpire will state to the crew in this order:

OPTION 1 – Present to offensive head coach.

Result of the play – The batter-runner is called “out” on the force at 1B and R2 scores. R1 remains on 2B.

Or

Penalty – A ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count, R2 is placed on 3B and R1 is placed on 2B.

OPTION 2 – Present to defensive head coach.

Result of the play – The “option” selected and confirmed by the offensive head coach.

Or

Penalty – R1 is called “out” for leaving early. “No pitch” on the batter and the count remains 1-1. R2 is placed on 2B.

All umpires agree to the options. The plate umpire will call both coaches together. Both base umpires shall be close enough to listen to the presentation and be ready to rule on any appeal when requested. They must remain attentive to the field and all participants.

The plate umpire will present the first options to the offensive head coach in the following manner:

“Coach – on the previous play the pitcher committed an illegal pitch.

You have the option of taking the result of the play . . .

The batter-runner is out on the force at 1B for 2 outs, the runner from second base scores and the runner from first base remains on second base.

OR

The penalty for the illegal pitch – a ball is awarded to the batter for a 2-1 count, the runner from second base is placed on third base and the runner from first base is placed on second base.

Which option do you select?”

In this scenario, the offensive head coach selects “the result of the play”.

The plate umpire reiterates the selection –

“Coach – you have selected the result of the play, correct?”

The coach states “YES”.

The plate umpire will now present the second options to the defensive head coach in the following manner:

“Coach – on the previous play, the runner who started on first base left too soon.

You have the option of taking “the result of the play”, which is the option selected by the offensive head coach . . .

The batter-runner is out on the force at 1B for 2 outs, the runner from second base scores and the runner from first base remains on second base.

OR

The penalty for the runner leaving early – the runner who started on first base is called “OUT”. “No pitch” on batter and the count remains 1-1. The runner who started on second base is placed back on second base.

Which option do you select?”

In this scenario, the defensive head coach selects “the result of the play”.

The plate umpire reiterates the selection –

“Coach – you have selected the result of the play, correct?”

The coach states “YES”.

The defensive head coach now states they want to appeal that the runner from second base missed third base. U3 rules R2 out. There are now 3 outs to end the inning.